Non-existent voters' names in West Bengal

*404. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the CEO of West Bengal detected seventy lakhs non-existent voters' names as reported in the Statesman, Kolkata edition, dated the 5th February, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof and status of those indicating their existence, citizenship status, *modus operandi* adopted for their inclusion in the list and implication on the Assembly Poll, 2001 results;

(c) the steps taken to prevent such happening in future; and

(d) the reported incidents of such findings, if any, in other States including Assam?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) The last intensive revision of electoral rolls in the State of West Bengal was undertaken in 1994 with reference to 01.01.1995 as the qualifying date. It may be added that since then only summary revisions of the electoral rolls have been taken place in the years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 with reference to 01.01.1997, 01.01.1998, 01.01.1999, 01.01.2000 and 01.01.2001 respectively as the qualifying date.

The special revision of electoral rolls of an intensive nature with 01.01.2002 as the qualifying date, was undertaken in West Bengal. An house to house verification and enumeration was conducted from 5th November to 4th December, 2001. Through the process of verification of voters, whose names appeared in the preliminary list, 69,30,851 voters were reported as either dead or not residing at the addresses shown in the electoral rolls published in 2001. Hence, the names of these voters (69,30,851) were deleted from the draft electoral rolls with 01.01.2002 as the qualifying date, which was published on 4th February, 2002.

(b) During the house to house verification cum enumeration

conducted as a part of Special Revision of Electoral Rolls of an Intensive Nature-2002, names of 69,30,851 electors were deleted at the stage of publication of draft rolls. Deletion of these names was carried out on the above grounds only and not on the basis of verification of citizenship. The names of these deleted electors might have been included during the continuous process of revision of rolls which started with the *de novo* intensive revision of electoral rolls of 1995 and continued with the summary revision of 1996 and special revision of 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001. It is evident that during the summary revision, no house to house verification is done and names of the electors on grounds of death and shifting of residence get accumulated unless a specific request for deletion is filed.

In the general election to the Legislative Assembly of West Bengal-2001, 75.05% electors voted and it is not possible *prima facie* to identify as to whether any of those electors, whose names have since been deleted, cast their vote in that election.

(c) The summary or intensive revision of electoral rolls is taken up every year as per the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 with a view to making them up-to-date as far as possible. Due publicity is also given at the time of revision to create awareness and copies are displayed at all the polling stations of the Assembly Constituencies so as to help the electors to find out as to whether their names exist in the electoral rolls or not and they may get their names enrolled or get the names of the members of their family deleted if they have either expired or shifted their residence. As a result of the special revision of electoral rolls of an intensive nature in 2002, the electoral rolls were rectified. In future too, the efforts would continue to be made to ensure that the problem of non-existent voters do not find place in the electoral rolls.

(d) As regards the reported incidents of such nature in other States including Assam, information with regard to all the States and Union Territories except Bihar and Tripura, may be treated as NIL. In respect of Bihar, during the summary revision of the electoral rolls, 2002, names of 9,39,761 electors were deleted under Rule 21A of the

Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Similarly in Tripura, the names of 52,614 electors have been deleted under Rule 21A of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

Model Land Use Policy for urban areas

*405. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to formulate a Model Land Use Policy for urban areas to meet the aspirations of the economically weaker sections;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the Model Land Use Policy is likely to be brought before the Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Land is a State subject. Union Government can only provide guidelines in the matter. It is for State Governments to formulate a comprehensive policy in the matter. National Housing & Habitat Policy 1998 takes into account the interests of economically weaker sections of the society, while defining action areas in the Land matters as follows:—

(i) Land is the most critical input for housing. Public agencies should continue to undertake land acquisition proceedings for housing and urban services. Other more feasible alternatives like land sharing and land pooling arrangement, particularly in the urban fringes, should be considered through public and private initiatives with appropriate statutory support. Land assembly and development by the private sector should be encouraged.

(ii) The repeal of the Urban Land (Ceiling & Regulation) Act, 1976 is expected to ease the availability of land for all including the urban poor.

(iii) Town and Country Planning regulations may be modified to